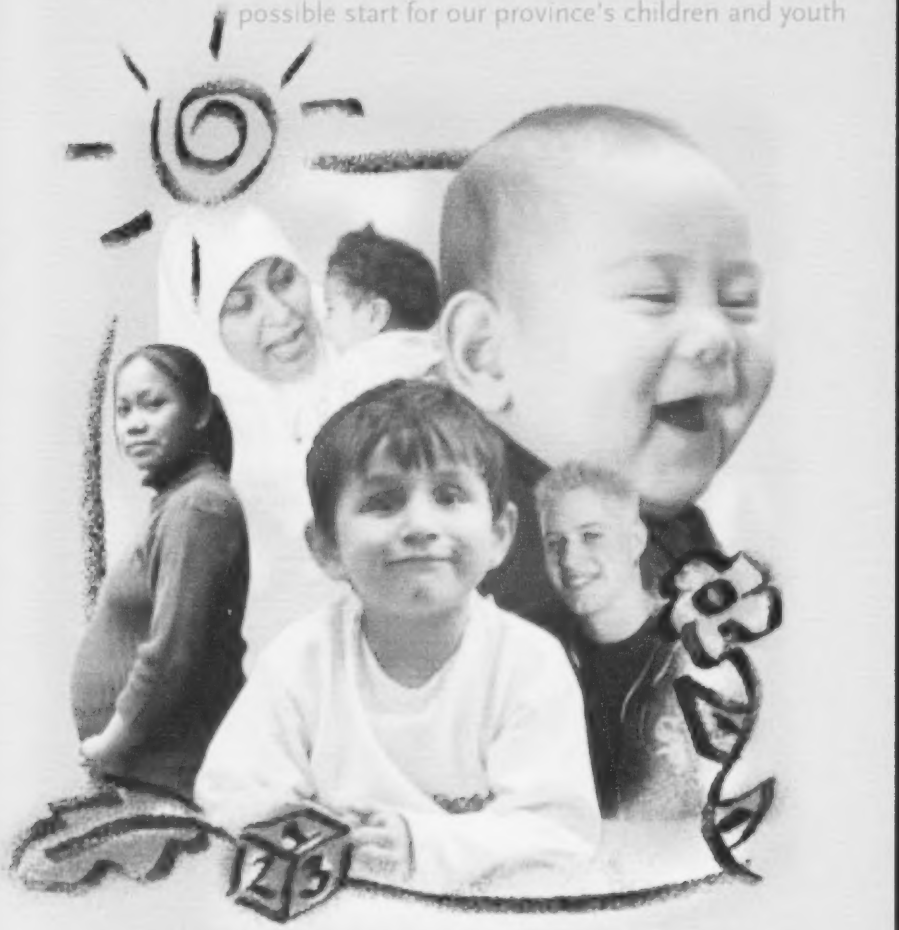
HEALTHY CHILD MANITOBA

Ensuring the best possible start for our province's children and youth



Programs and Services

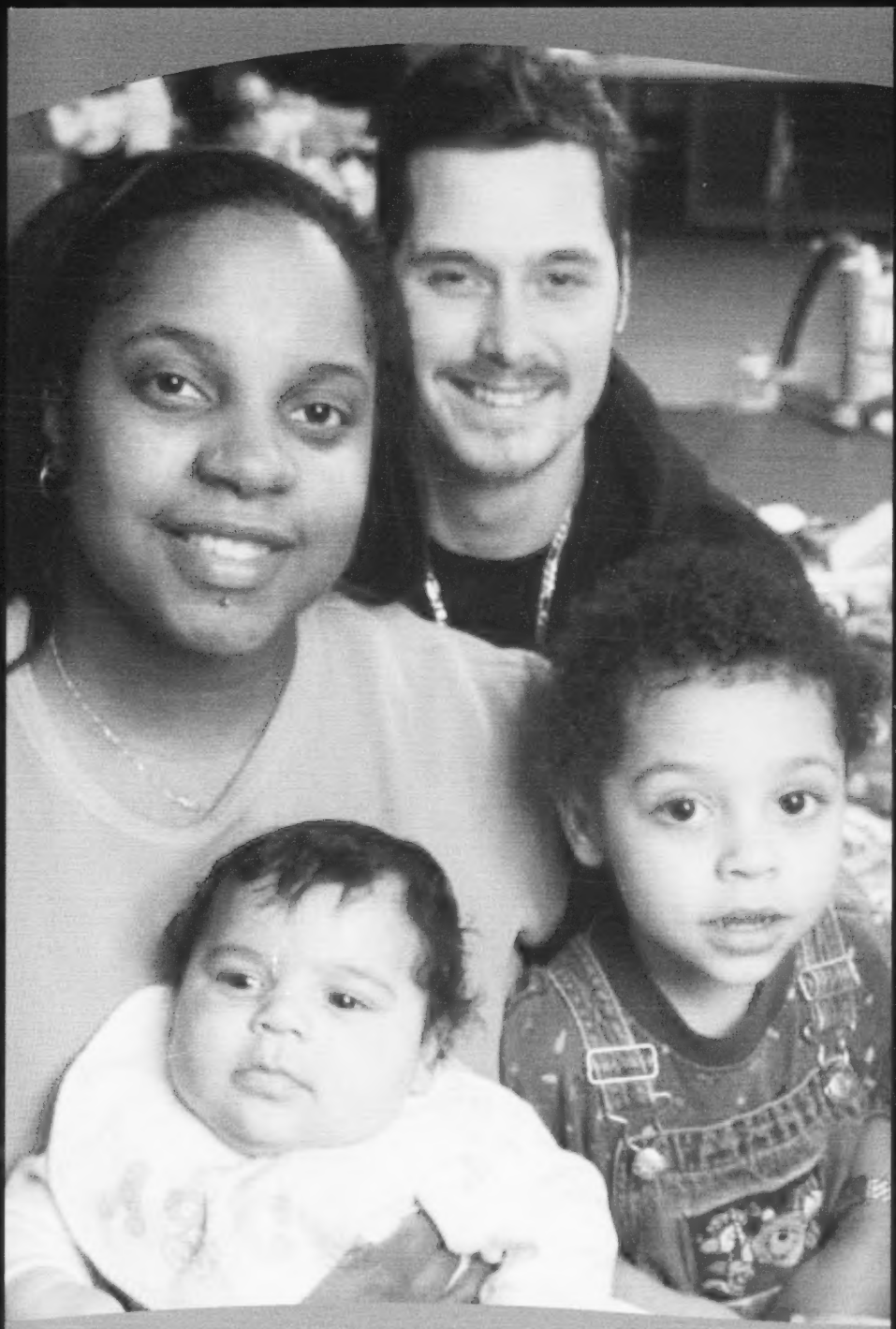
Healthy Child Manitoba

Manitoba

Putting children and families first

"When we **get it right** for our kids,
we get it right **for all of us.**"





"We've **learned more** in the last 30 years about what babies and young **children know than we did in the preceding** 2,500 years."

Alison M. Gopnik, Andrew N. Meltzoff & Patricia K. Kuhl *(1999)* The Scientist in the Crib: Minds, Brains and How Children Learn ***(p. 22)*** New York: William Morrow & Company Inc.

We have always known that early childhood is a special time and that parents and caregivers play the most important role in children's development. Current research helps us realize why the first five years of life are so critical and to understand what we, as parents, community organizations and government, can do to give all children the best possible start in life. Linking parents' common sense knowledge with new scientific research, the Government of Manitoba has established a network of programs and supports for children, youth and families.





Led by the Ministers of the Healthy Child Committee of Cabinet, Healthy Child Manitoba (HCM) is our government's long-term, cross-departmental strategy to support healthy child and adolescent development. HCM brings together seven provincial departments: Health; Family Services and Housing; Education and Youth; Aboriginal and Northern Affairs; Culture, Heritage and Tourism; Justice; and Status of Women — with numerous community organizations — to put this new knowledge into action and achieve the Healthy Child Vision:

The best possible outcomes for Manitoba's children

The goals of HCM are to help all of Manitoba's children to be:

- physically and emotionally healthy;
- safe and secure;
- successful at learning; and
- socially engaged and responsible

to their fullest potential.

Research on early brain development has helped us understand:

"The brain matures in the world, not the womb."

Canadian Institute on Child Health

- A baby's brain at birth contains approximately 100 billion nerve cells or neurons — the number of stars in the Milky Way galaxy — and the same number of neurons as an adult.

- Although we are born with virtually all the neurons we'll ever have, these neurons are only beginning to work together. At birth, our brains are still "under construction." A baby's early experiences with caring adults — giving them lots of opportunities to taste, touch, hear, see and smell — build the connections that are critical for a lifetime of learning.

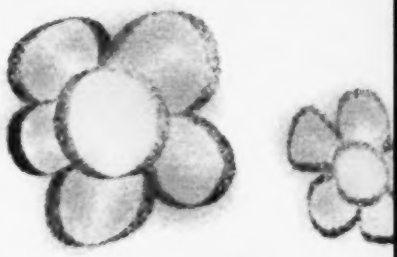
- Babies and preschoolers who experience warm and loving care, attention, good nutrition, reassuring voices, storytelling and reading, will be better prepared for successful learning throughout life. Evidence also indicates that babies who form a secure attachment to a parent develop stronger immune systems, that will serve them for their whole lives.

- Research has shown that children and their families benefit from programs which provide support early in life and include:

- **good nutrition**
- **home visiting**
- **effective parenting**
- **high quality learning and care**

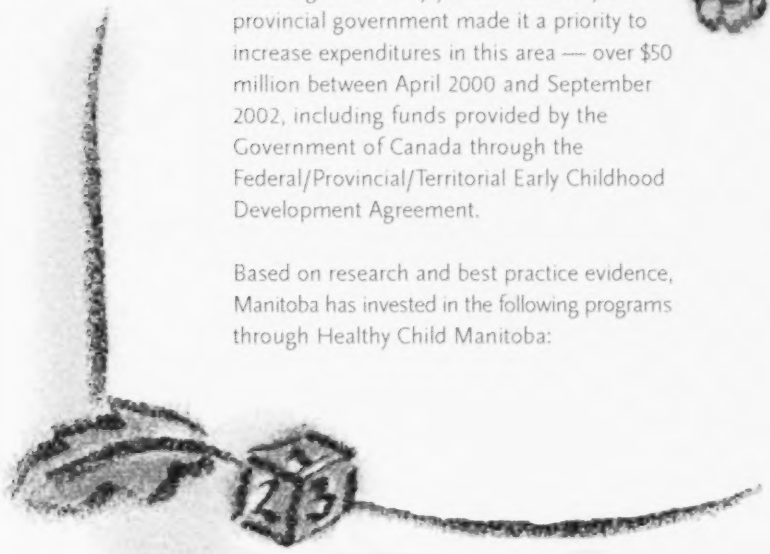


GOVERNMENT ACTION



In Manitoba, we recognize the value of investing in the early years. That's why the provincial government made it a priority to increase expenditures in this area — over $50 million between April 2000 and September 2002, including funds provided by the Government of Canada through the Federal/Provincial/Territorial Early Childhood Development Agreement.

Based on research and best practice evidence, Manitoba has invested in the following programs through Healthy Child Manitoba:



Healthy Baby

Healthy Baby is a two-part program of financial benefits and community supports for pregnant women.

The Manitoba Prenatal Benefit is a monthly financial benefit available to lower income pregnant women. The benefit is provided to help women meet their nutritional needs during pregnancy, helping their babies to get the best possible start.

Community Support Programs are friendly, informal places where pregnant and new moms and their families can learn more about nutrition, child development and general health and wellness. Programs and outreach offer a point of connection for women to share their experiences, ideas, concerns and excitement with other expectant and new moms.



Baby First and Early Start

Home Visiting Programs

Healthy Child Manitoba supports home-visiting programs because we know they strengthen parent-child relationships and help families create healthier, more nurturing homes for their children. Home visitors connect families with community resources that can make a difference in their lives and support parents through important transitions in their child's life such as entering child care or preschool.



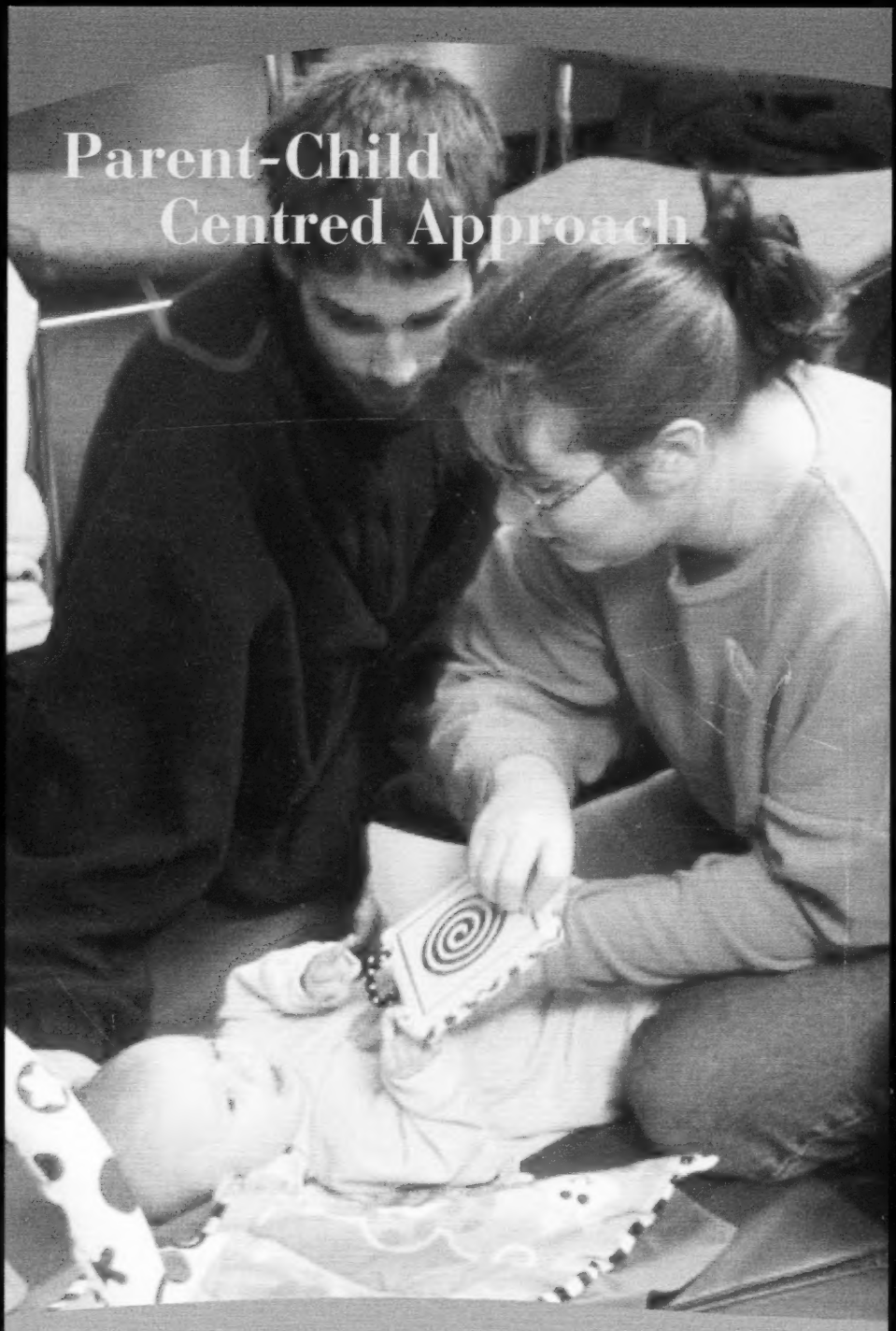
BabyFirst is a home-visiting program delivered across the province through the public health system. A public health nurse meets with expectant or new parents to learn about the family's strengths and needs. Together they decide on the level of support that best fits the family's individual situation. A home visitor then meets regularly with the family until the child is three years old, supporting parents to develop healthy parent-child relationships and enhanced parenting skills. Home visitors help parents learn how to solve problems and make the best use of the programs and services in their community.

Early Start is a home-visiting program for parents of preschool children offered through many licensed child care programs, or in partnership with regional health authorities, schools and community organizations. Home visitors meet with families on a regular basis to encourage healthy, positive parent-child relationships, connect families to resources in their community and support parents as they prepare their children to learn in school. Home visitors also work closely with the family's child care centre and with other community organizations to offer programs in areas such as parenting, family literacy and nutrition.

By age three, a child's brain is likely to be twice as active as the brain of an adult.

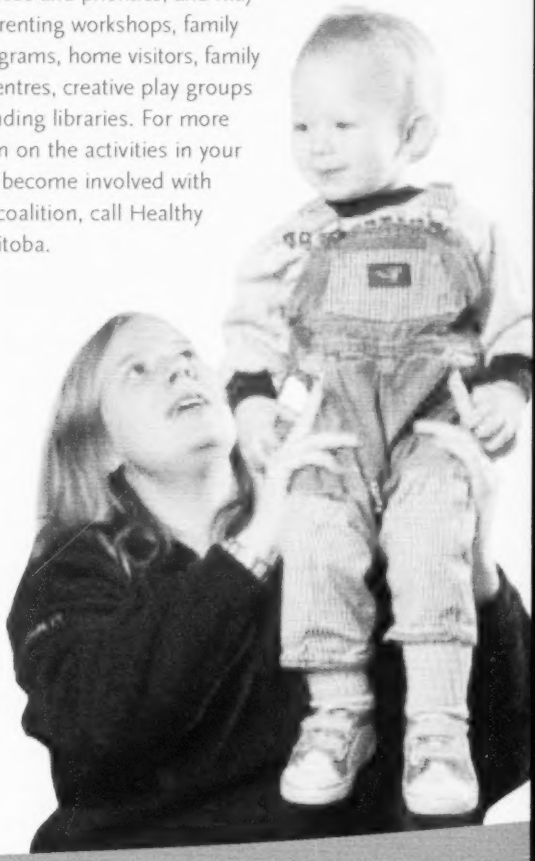


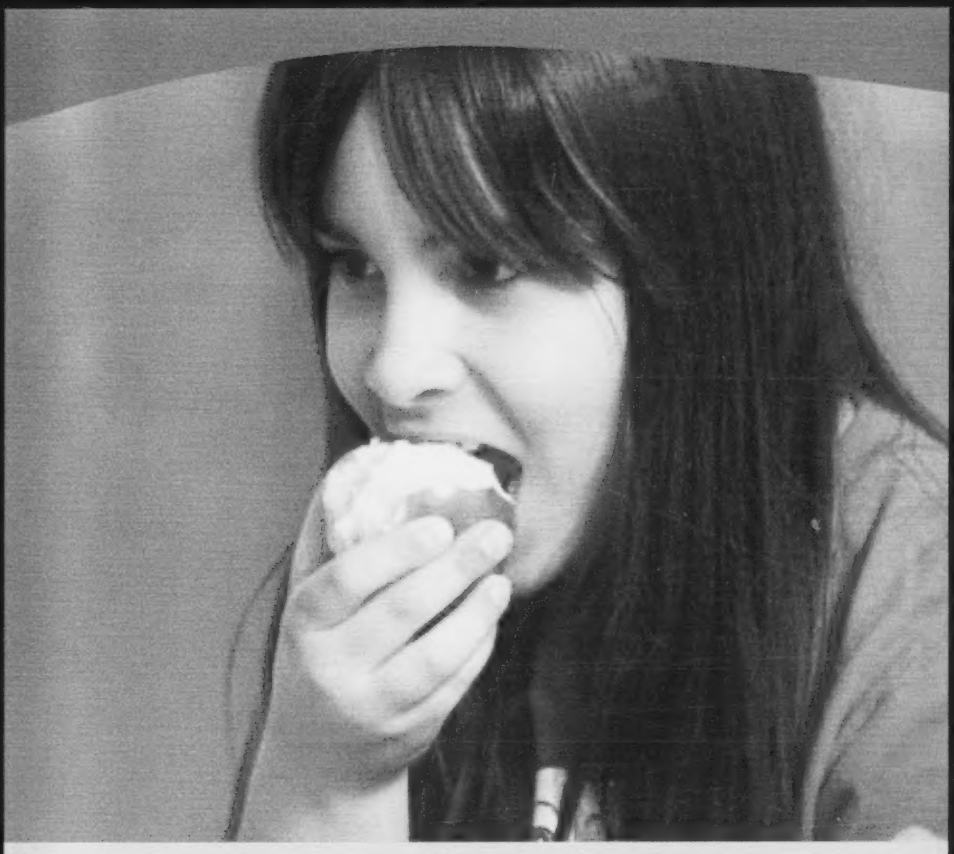
Parent-Child Centred Approach



All across Manitoba, parents, community organizations, school divisions, health authorities, cultural groups and the business community are working together in regional Parent-Child Centred Coalitions to support children and families in their communities. Using modest government funding, coalitions offer an amazing range of activities focused on parenting supports, nutrition, literacy and building the capacity of communities to support healthy families. Activities vary by region, depending on local needs and priorities, and may include: parenting workshops, family literacy programs, home visitors, family resource centres, creative play groups and toy lending libraries. For more information on the activities in your area, or to become involved with your local coalition, call Healthy Child Manitoba.







Middle Childhood and Adolescent Years

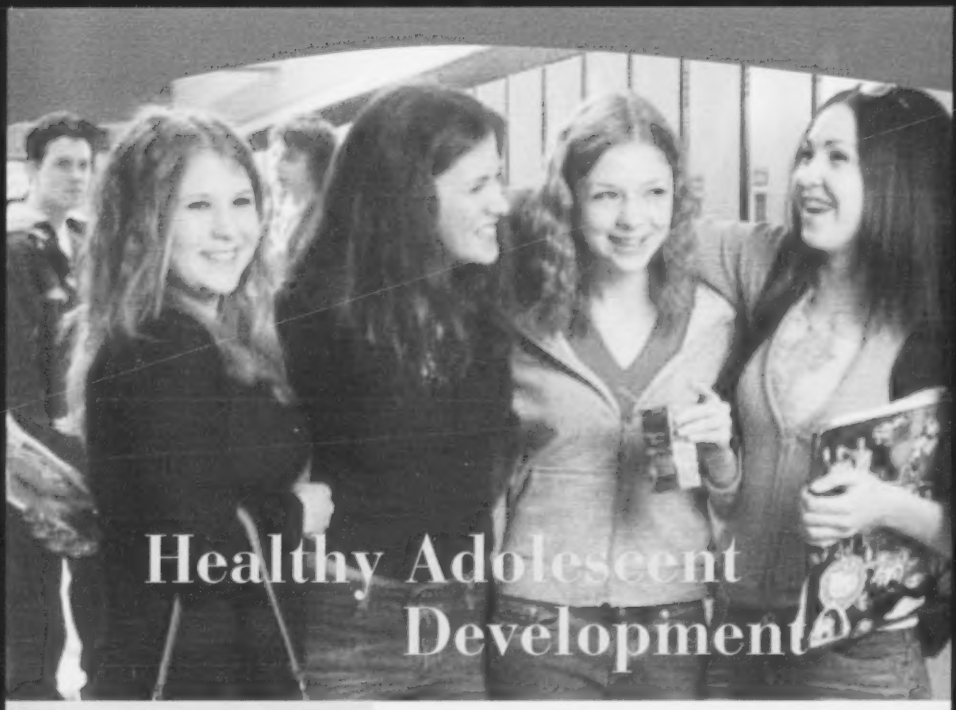
New research shows that communities can sustain a successful start in the early years with effective supports for children as they grow into young adulthood.

Healthy Schools



A school is often the hub of activities that can contribute to a healthy community. Recognizing that health and learning go hand in hand, HCM partners, Manitoba Health and Manitoba Education and Youth are working with regional health authorities to develop the Healthy Schools initiative. Working together with community partners, Healthy Schools will promote healthy lifestyles and activities that promote lifelong wellness, including a strong focus on good nutrition and increased opportunities for physical activity, for students, school staff, parents, families and their local neighbourhoods.





Healthy Adolescent Development

New research shows that early adolescence is another crucial time for brain development.

The transition to adolescence is all about learning skills, gaining independence, strengthening relationships, making healthy choices and planning for the future. The Government of Manitoba is investing in a wide range of community organizations to support healthy adolescent development, including pregnancy prevention initiatives; supports to teen parents and their babies; mentoring programs; culturally appropriate and youth directed programs; public awareness and health-related services.

FETAL ALCOHOL SYNDROME

Every parent wants to provide their child with the best possible start in life. To support this, Healthy Child Manitoba is prioritizing the prevention of "Fetal Alcohol Spectrum Disorder" (FASD) and improving supports for people and families affected by FASD.



- Working with community partners, HCM is spreading the message: when you're pregnant, no alcohol is best. A cornerstone of the prevention strategy is the Stop FAS program, a one-on-one mentoring program to encourage high-risk women to stop drinking during pregnancy.



- HCM partners with community organizations to support families living with the challenges of FASD; provides information to families, communities, educators and health professionals, and helps develop programs at the community level.

- Along with Health Canada, HCM funds FAS Information Manitoba (1-866-877-0050), a toll-free line for families and professionals who want information on FASD.

A NEW WAY OF WORKING TOGETHER

Healthy Child Manitoba is not alone in serving children and families. The partner departments under the Healthy Child Committee of Cabinet offer a wide variety of programs and supports to children, youth and families. Examples of these include:



Manitoba Health emphasizes **Early Childhood Health Promotion** through the prenatal and postnatal supports provided by local physicians and public health nurses. Through these services, parents receive assistance such as breastfeeding promotion, injury prevention, and childhood prevention of FASD.

Manitoba Health also supports regional health authorities to offer midwifery services, providing individualized care to women during pregnancy, birth and baby's first six weeks. Later on, children can receive immunization from a variety of diseases, as well as ongoing monitoring of their growth and development.

Manitoba Family Services and Housing is firmly committed to strengthening the child care system as details outlined in the **FIVE-YEAR VISION FOR CHILD CARE.** The plan sets very specific targets for improving the child care system by March 2007. Among its many initiatives, 5,000 funded child care spaces will be created and an additional 450 Early Childhood Educators (ECEs) will be trained.

The provincial government is also committed to increasing ECEs' wages by 10 per cent over that five-year period. For more information, please contact the Child Day Care office, Manitoba Family Services and Housing at 945–0776 (in Winnipeg) or 1–888–213–4754 (toll-free), or visit the web site at www.gov.mb.ca/childcare.



Families raising a child with a developmental or physical disability have some unique challenges. **Children's Programs** within the **Services for Persons with Disabilities Division** of Manitoba Family Services and Housing is committed to assisting families who have children with disabilities with some of the out-of-ordinary demands they may have because of their child's disability. Staff in regional offices provide families with family support services such as service coordination, respite, early childhood intervention for preschool children, behavioural assessment and therapy, transportation, supplies, equipment and home modifications. Children's Programs also provides funding to agencies that deliver specialized services and early intervention programs to children with disabilities and their families. For more information, contact the Manitoba Family Services and Housing regional office in your area.

Manitoba Education and Youth launched the **Early Childhood Development (ECD) Initiative** which provides funding for school divisions to support preschool programming and services. The ECD Initiative is designed to support school divisions in partnership with Parent-Child Centred Coalitions, parents and the community to respond to local needs and priorities for programming, which help prepare children for school.

MB4Youth.ca is a government-wide web site that connects youth to services and programs offered by the Government of Manitoba. The site highlights hundreds of youth programs across all departments, including education and training, health services, job opportunities and recreation programs.



Manitoba Aboriginal and Northern Affairs encourages the healthy development of children and youth in First Nations and Metis families by providing support to community-based Aboriginal organizations. For example, the Manitoba Aboriginal Sport and Recreation Council receives funding to identify and break down barriers that inhibit the participation of Aboriginal peoples in healthy recreation and sport activities.

Manitoba Aboriginal and Northern Affairs has also developed a web-based way for Aboriginal youth to provide ongoing comments on the National Aboriginal Youth Strategy (NAYS).



Participation in recreation and physical activity contributes to the mental, social, physical and spiritual well-being of Manitobans of all ages. **Manitoba Culture, Heritage and Tourism** supports recreation for children and youth through grants to provincial organizations, the promotion of safe environments, initiatives endorsing increased physical activity, financial support to the recreation delivery system, and education opportunities for volunteers and professionals on the benefits of recreation and access for all.



The **Neighbourhoods Alive!** strategy, adopted by the province in 2000, supports community development initiatives in designated neighbourhoods in Winnipeg, Brandon and Thompson. Neighbourhoods Alive! provides funding for a wide variety of community-driven projects, including many for children, youth and families.

Lighthouses is one initiative of the Neighbourhoods Alive! strategy. Delivered by **Manitoba Justice,** Lighthouses provides funding for interested community agencies throughout Manitoba to foster partnerships with youth and police. Lighthouses works together with youth to develop recreational and crime prevention activities. These projects operate in schools and recreation centres outside of school hours and can consist of sports, arts, music, educational opportunities and other activities for youth.

The **Manitoba Women's Directorate** is a provincial government department established to ensure that the distinct needs and concerns of women are incorporated into public policy, legislation and programs. Since women are often the primary caregivers and nurturers of children, or the heads of their families in single-parent households, the Directorate ensures that women's views are considered within the Healthy Child Manitoba mandate and reflected in its programs and services.



Healthy Child Manitoba is dedicated to working with families and communities to get it right for everyone by first getting it right for children and youth.

For more information on Healthy Child Manitoba and its programs, please call

945-2266 in Winnipeg or toll-free 1-888-848-0140
or visit the HCM web site at www.gov.mb.ca/hcm



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